



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PITT'S ABANIKANDA IS DOAK WALKER NATIONAL RUNNING BACK OF THE WEEK

Junior erupts for 320 yards to break 47-year-old single-game school rushing record held by Tony Dorsett

DALLAS (SMU) – Pitt running back **Israel Abanikanda** broke Hall of Famer and 2001 Doak Walker Legends Award winner Tony Dorsett's single-game school rushing record with 320 yards and six touchdowns as the Panthers topped Virginia Tech, 45-29. The record performance has earned Abanikanda the **Doak Walker National Running Back of the Week** honor for games of the weekend of Oct. 8.

The historic day was notable as Abanikanda's 8.9-yards-per-carry on 36 carries came against a rushing defense giving up only 100.8 yards per game coming into the game. Dorsett's previous school record was 303 yards set vs. Notre Dame on Nov. 15, 1975.

Abanikanda, a 5-11, 215-pound junior from Brooklyn, N.Y., tied the 112-year-old school record for rushing touchdowns in a game – initially set by Norman Budd against Ohio on Oct. 29, 1910 – as well as the ACC single-game record. The 320 yards are the fourth-best single-game total in ACC history. Abanikanda now leads the country in total touchdowns (13), rushing touchdowns (12), points (78) and all-purpose yards per game (186.17). He is second in rushing yards (830).

The Panthers are idle this week to prepare for an Oct. 22 game at Louisville at 8 p.m. ET on the ACC Network.

Other candidates for the honor in Week 6 included:

- **Zach Charbonnet, UCLA:** Charbonnet surpassed the 100-yard rushing mark in the first half and went on to record a career-high 198 rushing yards on 22 carries in No. 18 UCLA's 42-32 win over No. 11 Utah in the Rose Bowl. Charbonnet had a 49-yard run in the game, his longest with the Bruins, and amassed 125 yards on 10 carries in the first half. Charbonnet now has four games of 100-plus rushing yards this season.
- **Daba Fofana, Navy:** The sophomore fullback rushed for a career-high 159 yards and three touchdowns to guide Navy to a 53-21 win over Tulsa. Fofana scored all three of his touchdowns in the second quarter on runs of 47, 15 and 11 yards, part of his 21-carry day that led the Midshipmen to a 36-14 halftime lead.
- **Charles McClelland, Cincinnati:** The senior rushed for career-high 179 yards and two touchdowns, including the go-ahead 35-yard score with 9:24 remaining, to lift No. 24 Cincinnati to a 28-24 win over USF at Nippert Stadium. McClelland, who has overcome two season-ending injuries in his career, sealed the game with a nine-yard run on 4th-and-1 in the game's final minute.

The **Doak Walker Award presented by the PwC SMU Athletic Forum** has been awarded to the nation's top running back since 1990. For the first time, the award is recognizing a national running back of the week this season. A select 20-person committee from the award's full voting body of media and past winners chooses the weekly recipient. On July 20, a preseason candidates list was released and semifinalists for the award will be named on Nov. 22. A week later, the three finalists will be announced.

The 2022 Doak Walker Award winner will be unveiled live on *The Home Depot College Football Awards*, televised by ESPN on Dec. 8. The annual banquet, where the winner and the recipient of the 2022 PwC Doak Walker Legends Award will be honored, will take place in February on the SMU campus.

The Doak Walker Award is a member of the **National College Football Awards Association (NCFAA)**, which encompasses college football's most prestigious awards. The NCFAA's 25 awards have honored more than 800 recipients since 1935. Visit NCFAA.org for more information.

For more information on the Doak Walker Award, contact Jeff Lockhart (lockhart@smu.edu) at the PwC SMU Athletic Forum, visit doakwalkeraward.com and follow on Twitter at [@DoakWalkerAward](https://twitter.com/DoakWalkerAward).



2022 DOAK WALKER NATIONAL RUNNING BACKS OF THE WEEK

- Week 1 (Sept. 3)Chase Brown, Illinois
- Week 2 (Sept. 10) Khalan Laborn, Marshall
- Week 3 (Sept. 17) Samson Evans, Eastern Michigan
- Week 4 (Sept. 24)..... Blake Corum, Michigan
- Week 5 (Oct. 1) Jahmyr Gibbs, Alabama
- Week 6 (Oct. 8) Israel Abanikanda, Pitt
- Week 7 (Oct. 15)
- Week 8 (Oct. 22)
- Week 9 (Oct. 29)
- Week 10 (Nov. 5)
- Week 11 (Nov 12)
- Week 12 (Nov. 19)

2022 DOAK WALKER AWARD PRESEASON CANDIDATES LIST

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Devon Achane, Texas A&M | Deion Hankins, UTEP | Bijan Robinson, Texas |
| Braelon Allen, Wisconsin | TreVeyon Henderson, Ohio State | Raheim Sanders, Arkansas |
| Rasheen Ali, Marshall | George Holani, Boise State | Will Shipley, Clemson |
| Ronald Awaft, UTEP | Evan Hull, Northwestern | Shaun Shivers, Indiana |
| Tank Bigsby, Auburn | Mohamed Ibrahim, Minnesota | Jabari Small, Tennessee |
| Isiah Bowser, UCF | Dillon Johnson, Mississippi State | Chris Smith, Louisiana |
| British Brooks, North Carolina | Roschon Johnson, Texas | Dontae Smith, Georgia Tech |
| Jarek Broussard, Michigan State | Austin Jones, USC | E.J. Smith, Stanford |
| Antario Brown, NIU | Johnnie Lang Jr., Arkansas State | Tyjae Spears, Tulane |
| Chase Brown, Illinois | Keyvone Lee, Penn State | Titus Swen, Wyoming |
| Jermaine Brown, UAB | Joquavious Marks, Mississippi State | Tavion Thomas, Utah |
| Nate Carter, UConn | DeWayne McBride, UAB | Sean Tucker, Syracuse |
| Zach Charbonnet, UCLA | Chez Mellusi, Wisconsin | Calvin Tyler Jr., Utah State |
| Blake Corum, Michigan | Kendre Miller, TCU | Sean Tyler, Western Michigan |
| Travis Dye, USC | Jordan Mims, Fresno State | Chris Tyree, Notre Dame |
| Justice Ellison, Wake Forest | Keaton Mitchell, East Carolina | Xazavian Valladay, Arizona State |
| Samson Evans, Eastern Michigan | Damien Moore, Cal | Deuce Vaughn, Kansas State |
| Deshaun Fenwick, Oregon State | Devin Neal, Kansas | Kimani Vidal, Troy |
| Alex Fontenot, Colorado | Lew Nichols III, Central Michigan | Blake Watson, Old Dominion |
| Pat Garwo, Boston College | Nate Noel, App State | Treshaun Ward, Florida State |
| Frank Gore Jr., Southern Miss | Nathaniel Peat, Missouri | Harrison Waylee, NIU |
| Eric Gray, Oklahoma | Camerun Peoples, App State | Jalen White, Georgia Southern |
| Gerald Green, Georgia Southern | Dominic Richardson, Oklahoma State | Jamyest Williams, Georgia State |
| Tucker Gregg, Georgia State | Johnny Richardson, UCF | Nay'Quan Wright, Florida |
| Hassan Hall, Georgia Tech | | |